normally granted is 15 months or through bilateral agreement between parties to the dispute. India and the USA have signed a bilateral agreement for determining the RPT, which would be of little over 18 months. As per the agreement, all the existing QRs on BOP grounds would have to be removed by 1.4.2001.

Sick tea gardens in Himachal Pradesh

309. SHRI ANIL SHARMA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the number of sick tea gardens in the public sector and also in private sector in Himachal Pradesh with their locations;

(b) what steps Government propose to take to remove there sickness;

(c) whether the Government consider merger of small and unviable tea estates; and

(d) if so, details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) to (d) There is no Public Sector or Private Sector tea garden in Himachal Pradesh and hence the question of sick tea gardens in these sectors does not arise. However, there is a large concentration of small holdings numbering 3679 with an area of 2325 ha. being the total area under tea in the State.

Trade protocol signed between India and Russia

310. SHRI RAMACHANDRAIAH RUMANDLA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether India and Russia have signed a trade protocol in Delhi in January, 2000;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action taken to utilize Russian rupee debt funds?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) and (b) A Protocol was signed during the Sixth Session of the Indo-Russian Working Group on Trade and Economic Cooperation, held at New Delhi in January, 2000, under the aegis of the Indo-Russian Inter-Governmental Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific and Technological and Cultural Co-operation. Various bilateral trade related issues including